TOWN & COUNTRY CHURCH

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How to Finance the Church in Town and Country

• The Following Reports are from the Contributions to the Commission on Financing the Church, sent to the Columbus Convocation, September, 1943. Dr. Henry W. McLaughlin, Presbyterian Church in the U.S., is chairman of the Commission.

Important Announcement

BECAUSE of wartime printing conditions, it has been found necessary to issue TOWN AND COUNTRY CHURCH as a bulletin without regular monthly frequency. We expect, however, to be able to make available a series of informal papers, and to print nine of these issues in the course of twelve months, as we had planned and promised. The Committee on Town and Country of the Home Missions Council and the Federal Council of Churches asks you to be patient if copies do not arrive regularly.

Brief stories of what people are doing in local congregations and communities will be the chief features. The aim is to help put the worker in the small community into touch with numerous activities.

Part of Larger Program

The paper will be an important part of an enlarged "cooperative rural church program," that will encourage a national "rural church movement." The paper will be closely linked with a regularly held National Convocation on the Church in Town and Country.

This Issue

• This is the third of a series of papers. It is published in NOVEMBER, 1943. The price per copy is 15 cents; any nine issues for $1.00. Rates will be quoted on larger quantities.

The "We" Plan

KENNETH A. ROADARMEL

• The only satisfactory way to finance a town and country church is by linking the financial program with the whole life of the country church. This will not just happen. It will take WORK and PLANNING.

The first thing to establish in our church program is a feeling of oneness. This is done of course, through serving sincerely, earnestly, and diligently. Serving through the pastor and through the people. Serving through establishing vacation church schools, week-day religious education which includes Sunday school papers and other materials given to every child to take home. We must broaden the base of church leadership. We must as a church, become a member of the community family.

Now, shall we say we are on our way? We have the ball rolling. It is a small ball, it gathers up little help as it rolls along and we are disgusted, discouraged, ready to quit a dozen times a week, but it does gather up a little help now and then, even though it loses some all too often. But here comes along a young married group, and it organizes a Sunday-school class and takes on a swimming pool project down at the creek. The school teachers catch on and contribute a survey and the use of the school library, teaching strength for the week-day religious instruction and choir leadership.

The ball is rolling. Nothing succeeds like success. The school board opens the school auditorium for religious drama, and the gymn for skating and recreation to keep our young people in our small town. The pastor is invited in for a religious assembly at the school, once a month. The fire department helps out in various ways. The grange organizes its juvenile work to fit into the picture. The 4-H ties into the Sunday school and the week-day religious education. All make up a Christ-centered program, and the community has changed almost over night, as the church is a moving guiding light. This is true because of Christian church people in each organization and they have discussed together, bringing Christ into each organization and into every family in the community.

Now the time has come to do something about finance. For sometime now, the people have been receiving regularly Sunday-school papers through their children, a monthly church paper or community paper with several church pages in it. The pastor has called on ALL the people. They have had neighborhood gatherings in their own area and have laughed together, sung together, and prayed together. This has reached ALL, not just church members, not just old established church area families, but everybody in these neighborhoods. Maybe they haven't all come, but they have been asked.

In other words, all in this community are beginning to say WE. They have stopped saying THEY at the church and THEY at the school. This means more than words can say. It means salvation for the community, socially, economically and spi-

ritually, because from now on one can talk about their soul's salvation and they will listen.

We could stop with the foregoing and say that finances would take care of themselves with such a program. It would be good, but not good enough. The financial committee will now be formed, with a broad base of leadership. Young people, women, and men, not just a Board of Deacons, not just a Board of Trustees. If the Constitution calls for them as the financial committee, let them appoint others to their committee.

Now let the committee lay out its territory. Two hundred families, 30 callers, only a few names for each caller. Programs set up, the callers have met for instructions, a letter has gone out to all the 200 families, two or three times in the past weeks. Things are all set. Oh, but you are talking about the Every Member Canvass. So far this has been true, but now there is a difference. Each caller carries a pledge card that carries several suggested ways of giving. First, *I* will try to attend *my* church at least once a month this year. Second, so much per week in dollars and cents for current expenses and benevolences. Next, so much produce or handmade articles to be sold at the end of the summer, or to be used in the Harvest Home Service. Next, a place to sign for some special Lord's Acre projects. The callers will have a wall placard for each family. (A suggestion would be to have William Boddy's poem, "My Church," on it, along with a picture of their church. At the bottom will be glued and clipped an empty envelope box.) The last letter that went out explained it.

The idea is, pledge, if you can; if not, give what you can in the envelope so that you receive credit. You will be notified about the produce and the Lord's Acre projects when the time comes. (These two things are especially for those who are poor and willing to give but have so little cash that they cannot give that.) The letter will have explained that the pastor does not wish to be hired and paid for funerals and weddings as one would hire a doctor or lawyer. He is your pastor, your church makes this possible, so please use him as you have need.

As the families receive their placard and its envelope box, they will also receive *only a month's supply of envelopes*. This means that at the church there will be a simple mail box, and the last two weeks of each month those who come to church can very simply pick up their next month's envelopes along with tracts, announcements, devotional quarterlies, magazines, and many other things. You see, this is an outlet for religious literature and information. Those who do not come will be called on between the first and second Sundays of the new months. You see why we want each caller to have only about six families. If three come, during the month, he has only three to visit.

This brings in the other side of the picture—the lay visitation. The callers will be changed every six months. The calls to be made will be upon those who do not come, those who need it most. It will not be just a call for money. It will be a call to deliver a devotional quarterly, magazines, tracts and many other things the church has to offer. It will be a call to interest them in church, it will be a call to ask them how their children are doing in the week-day religious instruction. It will be a call to leave new envelopes and ask for the old ones, hoping that they will bring them themselves the next month. Complicated? Not at all. Once it is under way, several things are being done at the same time, which saves leadership and accomplishes much more.

Time and again, those of us who have watched this thing have been completely astonished at the result. Not only in money, but far more important in the WE feeling in the church and the community. This WE feeling includes Jesus Christ for the leaders, for the boys and girls, and for their parents who haven't heard or thought of Him for years.

I think the time will come when the communities will have an integrated financial campaign, such as the Community Chest in cities. The idea of a United Church Canvass for communities is spreading. I also think that the time will come when the community will sell season tickets which will admit to all its activities with special low rates for families. This is a dream, but one we need to work on soon, and the financial program described above might be called its first step. The finances of our town and country churches are assured tomorrow, not by a lot of special schemes but by an integrated WE program.

Intelligent Leadership

E. DARGAN BUTT

• Most small rural congregations need intelligent leadership and an informed program. Sunday offerings and special appeals at certain seasons are not enough. There must be planning and articulation, and a definite program to implement the ideas through which the small congregation is to do its primary part in the financing of the work. May I suggest a few steps toward this end.

In the first place, every church congregation should have a committee that is responsible for the maintaining and forwarding of the church's program. This committee, with the minister, should meet regularly, and make and prosecute the program which is to be followed. No matter how small a congregation is, there can be a committee, if only three in number. One of their duties would be to formulate a definite program for the year, or for two or three years, based upon the actual conditions of the church and community. They should make a budget for the coming year, outlining just what can and must be expended by the local congregation during the next year.

This budget should contain: (a) Current expenses, such as light, heat, church school literature, and the like; (b) Salary. That part which is to be paid by the local congregation; (c) Missionary giving, and general church obligations; (d) Repairs, improvements, and expansion. (May it be said that no matter how small the resources of the local congregation are, every attempt should be made to include in the budget something in each division outline, in order that the life of the congregation may be well-rounded, progressive, and

out-going.) Their estimate of the financial ability of the congregation must be based on the expected income for the year, from subscriptions, from plate offerings, and from special appeals, leaving a reasonable allowance for uncertainty, on the one hand, or, in other cases, for faith in greater growth during the year. This brings us to the second step, which is the Every Member Canvass.

Every church congregation, no matter how small, should have an annual Every Member Canvass for the support of the church. The duty of a Christian it not only to follow Christ in his life, to worship God in His Church, and to pray and study and work for the spread of His Kingdom, but it is also to GIVE, in order that the work of the Kingdom may go forward. Every member—man, woman, and child—and all who attend or are friends to the church, should have placed before them each year their definite responsibility for seeing to it that their part of the Vineyard of the Lord is adequately taken care of. There should be a time and place when the whole group comes together to consider their individual and corporate responsibility for the support of their church.

I have found it wise to have a definite Sunday each year given to this purpose. This Sunday might be designated "Stewardship Sunday," or "Roll Call Sunday," or "Canvass Sunday," or "Pledge Sunday," or whatever seems best. On this Sunday, usually late in November or early in December, the whole congregation comes together as a family, perhaps having dinner together, and after a service of worship in which the spiritual values inherent in Christian stewardship are emphasized, the program for the coming year, with the budget to be raised and spent outlined, should be presented, so that every person can know just what is to be attempted, what is needed and expected, and what each person's responsibility is.

A pledge card should be given to each person giving him an opportunity to promise something by the week, or month, or year, or at certain seasons when it will be convenient for him to give. By the results of this canvass there will be available to the minister and committee an index as to the ability and willingness of the people to give, and an incentive to the people to make their contribution to the church's program realistic and consistent. What is promised is a pledge, and should be paid as such, all undesignated loose offerings on Sundays, and special offerings, being in addition to the pledges of the people. The mention of special offerings brings us to the next consideration, and that is the Lord's Acre project method of church financing.

The Lord's Acre method of dedicating a part of the crop to the church is as old as the Bible, but has recently been given a great impetus in the American church by many successful experiments. For information, write Farmers Federation, Asheville, N. C. It suggests a great opportunity to many people who do not have much cash money to raise something with which to pay their church pledge, or to give to some special project. It also opens the door to the congregation as a whole to develop a project for some special objective. While some must use the Lord's Acre method to raise money to pay their regular pledge, yet those who have had experience in this work tell us that the Lord's Acre method works best when it is dedicated to some special purpose, asking each person to develop a project for this special purpose in addition to their cash pledge. When the Lord's Acre project method is used to take care of a part of the annual budget, the pledge card should contain two places to be filled out, one for the cash pledge, and the other for the Lord's Acre project promise.

In regard to special appeals, while they should not be made often, they can be successfully used at certain seasons. But in almost all cases, in contrast to the pledge, special appeals should be presented as a voluntary matter, and no pressure placed on anyone, as some can give no more than the amount of their annual pledge.

Entertainments to raise money for the church, conducted in the right way, can be the source of good fellowship and a financial help to the church. They become dangerous when the nature of the entertainment is questionable, and when the members of the church depend on the public, through the entertainments, to pay for the church rather than assuming that responsibility themselves. Entertainments, like the Lord's Acre projects and the special offerings, should be for special objectives, and not, as a rule, held to raise money for current expenses.

Concerning the Collections

H. ROY PHILLIPPI

• Our little church is located in a small village surrounded by open country. A cyclone about thirty years ago wrecked the other two churches. No one was injured and no other buildings were seriously damaged. Since that historic June Sunday, we have had but one church.

The present pastorate began about eight years ago. At that time the minister and trustees began a fine fellowship that has lasted. We agreed that the minister is the spiritual leader of the church. The seven trustees, business men and farmers are entrusted with the financial responsibility of the church. We co-operate always, but they carry the load (Acts 6:2). The pastor does not know who gives, or how much. He never collects funds.

The trustees are free to call on the Men's Brotherhood (we call it the Goodwill Club) or any other organization or individual to assist in collecting funds, but the whole program is in their hands. Never will we forget the first New Year's eve when at 11:12 P.M. two trustees called the minister out of bed to tell him that they had secured the necessary $50 to balance the budget for the year.

The church also has a financial secretary who checks the gifts coming from the envelope system, cash gifts, gifts from pledges and occasional gifts. The treasurer receives all monies. On an order from the trustees, voted at their monthly meetings, he pays all bills. The trustee

board has a secretary who keeps minutes of all transactions at the board meetings. An itemized report is given of all funds at the annual meeting of the congregation.

We also agreed on certain principles. They are simple, but fundamental. We tell the truth to the congregation. We let the contributors know the facts. If the budget is placed at $4,000, they are quite sure we need that much. They know we have no "nest eggs" undeclared. The reports are not juggled to make them "rosy." If there is a deficit, we state it. If a balance, they know it. In finances, as in other things, our words should be "yea, yea, and nay, nay." Nothing bewilders the people more than misleading information.

We pay as we go. The first few years we were paying on an old debt. The money was not always available during the summer to pay salaries. Our fine trustee board went to the local bank and borrowed the money so that the expenses were paid on time. (Romans 13:8.) Now we carry a balance so that the summer expenses are carried without borrowing. In the eight years the salaries have not gone past the 10th of any month without being paid.

We use the mails freely. Almost all the books of the New Testament are letters from ministers to churches. We like to send out a letter to all the congregation announcing the program and the date of the ingathering. We also enclose timely denominational literature giving the larger program of the church. In the second letter we include a survey of the local church program. We state accomplishments of the past year, the total attendance at the church services, attendance at the church school, outline the activities of the Goodwill Club, Women's organizations, Youth groups, improvements in the equipment, community activities and worldwide work. In the third letter we enclose a copy of the budget, a subscription card, and an appeal for funds. This gives each one a chance to view the whole church program, its financial needs and to make up his mind. Then "as he has purposed in his heart" he can give. (II Cor. 9:7.)

In our church the whole canvass is set up at the January meeting of the Goodwill Club. All cards and plans are prepared beforehand. Last year it took just twenty minutes to have the whole assignment completed. We take the last week in January for the solicitation. We cannot take a single Sunday as our city brethren may, because of the distances.

Our church has carried on a church sale for the past fourteen years. It grew out of the Lord's Acre idea, but many of our people live in the village or work in the nearby city and have no acres. Our Goodwill Club sponsors the sale. Farmers know how to carry on an auction. The men go through the community asking for gifts for the sale. On sale day they come from far and near, bringing trucks and trailers loaded with corn, wheat, oats, soy beans, pigs, goats, a calf, or a cultivator. The women bring their best cakes, pies, dressed chickens, fruits, and vegetables.

Everything becomes the property of the church. Nothing is sold on a commission basis. Five auctioneers, two clerks, the local fire department in uniform who handle the merchandise, everyone gives his time as a donation. At 12:30 the director announces the sale. Everyone goes into action. Within a few hours everything is sold, and hundreds of dollars are turned over to the church. Every sale is a fair deal through open bidding. Sale day always reminds me of the old celebration mentioned in Proverbs 3:9. It is a great community event when neighbors and old friends meet. Friendships are renewed, and the church is the topic of the day.

We try to make some major improvement in the property each year. People like to support a going concern. People like to have a pride in the church and its equipment.

Finally, we preach stewardship. No system of church finance will succeed unless it has behind it the spiritual realization of the joy of giving. Stewardship goes beyond the system, to the giver and prompts the right motive for the making of the gift.

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Specific Planning

GLENN F. SANFORD

• In order to have a lasting financial program for the rural church there must be some specific planning and promoting of those elements which affect the financial life of the rural people. Following are some of these principles which are being dealt with in the North Arkansas Conference of the Methodist Church.

1. By means of literature, schools, conferences, and personal interview, a Christian philosophy of the relationship of man to land is being developed. We are helping him to understand the laws of soil conservation, soil improvement, soil erosion, farm planning, etc.

In many rural life conferences the government and community agencies have been brought into the meetings and not only helped the people but by having the pastor and the church support their work the attitude of the people has been changed regarding their service.

All of this will increase the income from the farm. The church cannot be supported by a people living in poverty.

2. Churches in rural areas should be grouped according to a natural area in which there are many common interests. There should be a common center for all the group. This common center is usually determined on an economic basis.

3. In each natural area there is a stronger church at the center. The stronger leadership and the economic advantages has come largely from the rural areas immediately around this trade center. The larger church must not only share its leadership, but its economic advantage as well with these rural churches.

4. The church should assist each family to own their own farm and home. By encouraging them and helping them to take advantage of all the trends in production and trade this can be done. The community must have a cooperative interest in all its citizens in an economic way as well as in a religion expressed in worship.

5. In the North Arkansas Conference of the Methodist Church there is a pooling of a fund called "The Sustentation Fund" which comes from the churches and pastors reaching a given salary level. This fund is distributed among the pastors receiving the smaller salaries.

6. We are trying to eliminate the expense of frequent moves as far as possible.

A Detailed Plan of Procedure

A. Have one or more meetings of the official board

As soon as possible after Annual Conference, call a meeting of the official board. The board is composed of the pastor, stewards, trustees, superintendent of the church school, president of the missionary society, and one young person. In some instances the pastor should invite the church school officers, and teachers and the other officers of the missionary society to serve with the board. Suggestions for this meeting:

1. Organize the board—chairman, secretary, treasurer. When advisable, the secretary and treasurer may be the same person.
2. The official board will make a list of all the causes for which money is to be raised and estimate the amount of each including such items as the following: salaries, benevolences, church school, current expenses.
3. Decide which of these items will be included in the church budget. (All of the items which are to be paid from pledges constitute the church budget.)
4. Decide how all other items are to be raised.
5. Follow this plan in raising the church budget.
6. Make a list of the entire membership and constituency of the church.
7. Study the financial ability of each person in the constituency and write down an amount which he will be asked to pledge to the church budget for the year; and recommend that pledges be made on a weekly or monthly basis.
8. Carefully select canvassers, divide names of constituency among them in preparation for church pledge week.

B. Church Pledge Week.

1. Hold a fellowship meeting of all members and constituency of the church early in church pledge week (probably on opening Sunday of this week). Present a report from the meeting of the official board including the total financial needs of the year. Ask all present to make a pledge at this meeting.
2. Send canvassers out in twos to get pledges.
3. Hold meeting of official board at close of church pledge week to hear reports.
4. At this meeting make definite plans to reach persons who were missed in the first canvass of pledges.
5. Encourage parents to allow children to share in pledging and giving.

C. Paying Pledges.

1. Divide names of constituency among collectors or teams of collectors.
2. Collectors will arrange with those on their list as to the method of paying pledges.
3. Encourage payments weekly or monthly, using envelopes where preferred.
4. Hold monthly meetings of official board to hear reports and follow up the work.
5. Have "Pay Up" week each quarter, the week preceding quarterly conference, to collect to date unpaid pledges.
6. See that accurate report is prepared for quarterly conference.

D. Handling Funds.

1. Treasurer will receive and pay out money on order of the Board.
2. The board will provide the treasurer with a good record book and encourage him to use it.
3. The official board will make quarterly reports to the congregation.
4. The board will balance the budget quarterly, giving to each cause its proportionate share.

Financing in Kind: Two Experiments

HARRY E. BICKSLER

• The most natural method of financing a rural church is in kind, rather than in money.

In the early Jewish experience,

money gifts were unusual. This was true whether the support was for current expenses or for building purposes. They would bring gifts from their herds, flocks, and fields. Nehemiah was past master in leading and using of labor as well as gift materials.

As the Christian Church began, there were men like Barnabas who sold property and gave the proceeds, or a portion of it, to the church. It was customary to give as the Lord had prospered them. When there was little or no money, this continued to be expressed in things which they had.

Money has always been as a means of convenience. When the Jews were scattered, on returning to Jerusalem from the distant parts of the earth, it was simpler to carry money or some means of exchange with which to make their offerings at the Temple.

If you read the account of some of the most historic cathedrals of Europe, you will discover that much of the labor and a great deal of the material for construction were gifts of the people. Many of the paintings and carvings were "labor of love," in some cases taking years to complete.

The history of the American Church is filled with this kind of financing. Both in colonial days and in the pioneer days as the church moved westward, men and women built with their own hands, with materials that they gathered within their own community.

Financing for current support or for construction with cash, by tithe, or other proportionate giving, has advantages for people who are on a cash income, but it misses some of the advantages of "giving in kind." The latter method has a more personal relation between the giver, the gift, and the object of the gift.

In advocating "giving in kind" we neither depreciate giving in cash, nor do we urge it as an emergency or depression method. It can be a highly spiritual method of giving even for those who can give in terms of money. It can be a "labor of love" to follow the "Lord's Acre" plan of support, even if one were financially able to give in terms of money.

In two different parishes we have followed this method for construction and maintenance. There are many who say it won't work in these modern times. At the same time testimony could be gathered from one end of the country to the other where it has worked to great advantage in city, in town, and in country. Where churches have been built with little or no money, churches of beauty to the honor and glory of God. The two examples which we give are not isolated or unique. But the two examples are so different from each other in time, place and constituency as to indicate that it can be done today in many other places.

First example: Lingle, Wyoming. Time between 1922 and 1929, during the years when money was freer than usual. The constituency was made up of old-time ranchers, cowboys, homesteaders, and the largest portion was ex-soldiers who had drawn homesteads on an irrigation project. It was a small town of about 300 people and the newly developed farm community within a radius of ten miles. We had a little bungalow chapel, but felt that we needed a large parish house in which to serve this community of mostly newcomers.

The story is a long one, how with donated planning, labor, and materials, and a few thousand dollars from the Board of National Missions, and some support from eastern friends this group of people built a Parish House 100 by 46 feet which houses a stage, a gymnasium, club rooms, shower rooms, etc. These people were from every state in the union, and from every denomination, at least the membership represented fifteen different denominations, besides the Presbyterian which provided the minister.

Second example: Twelve years ago we came to southeastern Ohio, in the hills surrounding Oak Hill. This ministry began during the worst part of the depression, in the "thirties." Five small Welsh Presbyterian Churches and a mission chapel. Five years before our coming here, under the influence of Dr. Warren H. Wilson, Dr. Carl H. Elliott had done a fine piece of work in reorganizing these little country churches from a dying Circuit to a Larger Parish. It took five years to make this change. Always during their history covering a hundred years they had been accustomed to "giving in kind" for the support of their Welsh ministers. The minister's salary was small in terms of money, but usually he lived well, by the gifts of the people. This had little system to it. Often the left hand not knowing what the right hand was doing.

But when it came to the care of the church, they had a system. It was called "keeping month." It might take two or more years for a family's turn to come to care for the Church and "Tea House," but when that time came they would find the buildings turned over to them clean and in order, and so they were supposed to turn it over to the next family "keeping month." This plan has worked for over one hundred years.

Upon beginning our ministry here about twelve years ago we found two things needed to be done and in the midst of the Depression there was no money with which to do them. A manse and a Parish Center were needed; and second, the church buildings needed to be reconditioned and improved.

This Parish had been almost one hundred years old and had never owned a home for the minister. One reason was that the ministers settled among them with the idea of spending the rest of their lives there, and therefore bought their own home or small farm. Some of these men like Dr. DeForrest Williams were learned men (he had his Ph.D. from the University of London, England) and he died just a few months before we came. He taught in the academy that had been located in Oak Hill. But with the setting up this group of country churches on Larger Parish plan a manse and a Parish Center were necessary.

Never is the income of the farmers of this hill country nearly as high as the average for farmers over the nation. During depression it was almost non-existent. How could we enter into a building project that would require eight to ten thousand dollars? The old Welsh Synod furnished $500.00 with which we purchased about fifteen acres of land a mile east of Oak Hill. Of this, five

acres was a beautiful grove which had grown into a dense thicket. One day five men of the parish, the county surveyor, and the pastor met at the grove and marked fine young trees to be spared, and laid the five acres out into seven sections. Next day, after a call had been sent out, 90 men and 60 women and children came with many kinds of tools, and by night the grove had become a park.

The second stage of development was the building of a manse. This story is too long to tell here, but it is enough to say that today we have a lovely brick manse, eight rooms with bath, central heating, deep well with electric pressure tank, and many electric conveniences, much better than in any of their own homes, because the people organized and built with their own hands. It represents more than one thousand days of labor given, all hauling, all grading, and all common labor was gift. The head of a family would promise, say, $100.00 and then with his sons "work it out." Even the oak flooring was laid by these men who had never done such work before. In every phase of work the minister worked side by side with the men. Nehemiah and his story was always the inspiration. No man shirked.

Then came the Shelter House in the grove. The central section which many thought would be the final building in the grove, was started in the morning and finished by evening of the same day. Forty men worked on this project. The building then was 60 by 30 feet, upon pillars, and with a metal roof. Today this building has a ten-foot addition on each side, and a brick kitchen 20 by 30 feet at the rear, and it is a kitchen that would gladden the heart of many a town or city aid or missionary society.

But what of the church buildings? When we came here they were very much run down and badly in need of repair. Moriah was to have its Centennial in 1935. Following the example of the whole Parish in building the manse and Parish Center, they organized and in one way or another raised several thousand dollars in money, and largely with their own donated labor and much gift of materials they built a basement under the church and installed a furnace. Then they redecorated inside and outside of the church and Tea House. (Each of these Welsh Churches have a one, two or three room cottage at the rear of the church which they used to call their "ty capel," or as they now call it their Tea House.)

Here at the center of their parish, with no church closer than four miles, they have developed a property of 20 acres, a manse and a Shelter House with the parish grove, a property which could hardly be duplicated for less than $20,000.00, of which $2,000.00 was a gift from the old Welsh Synod (as it was merging with the regular Presbyterian Synods), and a loan of $1,000.00 from the Board of National Missions, which has been repaid at the rate of 10% a year, the last payment to be made in the next few months.

People Give If Interested

CLYDE N. ROGERS

• The American people have money to spend on things which they think are important. With that in mind, more money can be obtained to help in financing the church if the methods used suit the pattern of the community.

In all Protestant churches in the countryside there should be an every member canvass, an opportunity for systematic giving in small amounts. When one woman, who thought her annual five-dollar gift to the church was a large amount, was asked if she would give twenty-five cents a week, she said she could easily do that.

Many churches have raised funds for a large indebtedness on a penny-a-day plan. A surprisingly large amount can be obtained from a small congregation when each person gives five, four, three, two, or even one penny per day. This method was successfully used by a congregation in Minnesota.

Another method I have used has been a four-fold pledge in which the person agrees: (1) to pray for the church regularly; (2) to be present a certain percent of the time; (3) to give his tithe or a regular gift; and (4) to designate some way or ways in which he will serve the church. When he does as many of the four things as possible, he is considered as having an active relationship with the church.

In many churches the heads of the families make a pledge for the entire family. This is a mistake which should be corrected, since many of the children of today have a regular allowance or have an income of their own and should be taught to love to give to the church from infancy. In one church served by the writer, individual pledges were made by the young people, and in one year the budget of the church was raised fifty percent.

In making an every member canvass I have tried to have only those who are themselves enthusiastic call on other people to secure money for the church. A good representative is willing to give and to ask others to give. He must also be acceptable to the people upon whom he is to call.

On the parish in Indiana, quite a sizeable amount of money was secured by parish bazaars. Different ladies' groups of the parish made many types of handmade articles which were displayed at large city church gatherings, district meetings, and in public markets. Some of the groups gave occasional church suppers and had their own displays at these affairs.

The largest amount I have been privileged to help in raising was a Ladies' Aid "nest egg" of $209. This group had been saving small amounts for ten years for building a new church (with little idea that it would ever be used.) When I came as minister of the church I was told about it and suggested that it was time for the nest egg to hatch.

Even though at that time the church was paying only $125 per year toward the minister's salary, within nine months a stone church, valued at $12,500 was built, paid for, and dedicated. People who had formerly lived there were glad to share in the building of a new church. One man in the community, besides giving $250 in cash, gave more than one hundred days in actual labor. Others contributed both funds and labor

proportionately. A widow donated oak logs from which lumber was sawed for Beautiful pews. Most of the funds came in through personal gifts.

It has been my method in such projects to start construction as soon as possible and let enthusiasm generate as the project goes along. When people become enthusiastic, funds will come in with very little soliciting. It has been my experience that people give in proportion to their interest, and not in accordance with amount of money they may have.

In my present parish we are in the midst of a rebuilding project. For this special endeavor those most likely to give large amounts were approached first. As these sacrificed for the church, they gained in enthusiasm, and naturally helped others to catch some of their spirit. Besides personal gifts each organization has been asked to make pledges.

Working with the county 4-H Club leader we are planning a harvest festival which will make food available for needy people in villages nearby, as well as to raise a large sum for the church.

How Do You Manage?

• Jottings from the Ministers' Wives Group, at Camp Ohio, 1943, as reported by Marjory Dickinson, Rio Grande College, Rio Grande, O.

We started off the ministers' wives fellowship group with a "swap session" on what we had to manage, our chief problems, and some of the solutions.

"I find it increasingly difficult to manage in the face of an expanding church program, a new daughter, and lack of help," spoke up one busy mother.

"How am I going to get all the housework done, the church work attended to, and still be a human being with my family?"

"How can we deal with people who seek our counsel, and give them a sense of having time for them, when actually we are rushed to death?"

"How do you manage to get enough sleep?"

"How do you deal with parishoners, who think you should bring the children to all the meetings? What about the care of the children at night, when we are expected to attend meetings? We can't afford to pay someone to stay with the children, and it is hard on them to take them. Yet if the minister's wife does not go to the meetings, the people can't understand."

"When we go calling, the women seem to prefer to engage in 'small talk' with me. My husband would rather discuss theology and church matters."

"My husband does all the talking when we make calls."

"How much community activity should we carry on in a conservative community?"

"How can we find fellowship with people with whom we can discuss our social concerns?"

"What about recreation for the pastor's family? We want the children to grow up as naturally as possible without feeling they are Exhibit A. What should we do when our son goes with a girl who wants to go to the movies on Sunday nights?"

"My biggest problem is to find time to do those things I want to do for my own advancement, and also to learn better how to bring up my children properly."

Here are some of the solutions various members of the group had discovered:

A mother of six said, relative to attending meetings, "When the first child came we went to everything, when the second came we cut out the evening meetings, when the third came we cut out everything."

From a mother of a four year old, "I manage to get everyone else to do it. I was a minister's daughter, so they don't put anything over on me. But in the beginning I let it be known that I would accept no offices. Our job is to train leaders."

Another's solution, "We pay to have the children looked after at night, when it seems necessary. It pinches, but it seems the best solution."

On the ever present financial problems: "We live on a budget. It took my husband a long time to convince me we should, but it works."

"We take turns going to meetings. This also gives one of us free time at home after the children are in bed.

"Am I the only one who is lazy? I take a nap when the children do."

Relative to calling, "My husband and I don't call together. When he goes alone, people feel freer to counsel with him about their problems. When we go together, it becomes a social call. So he goes alone, and I make calls as I can."

Then we turned to the question, *Why* do we keep up the struggle?

Simply because we love it, we believe in it. We value the high privilege which is ours, of helping to reseed rural America with a rural culture that is Christian. We also gathered experience about the value of stated devotional periods, and of the unplanned, spontaneous experience. We realized that we do not manage in our own strength.

Committee on Town and Country

The Executive Committees of both the Home Missions Council and the Federal Council of Churches recently approved a plan which now establishes the Committee on Town and Country as officially a joint agency of both Councils. The Committee was begun in 1912 by the Home Missions Council. In 1931, the Federal Council recognized the Committee as "its channel of operation in this field." Since 1931, Benson Y. Landis of the Federal Council staff has served as part-time secretary.

Under the new plan the Federal Council assigns Mr. Landis for half his time as executive secretary of the Committee on Town and Country. He also continues as associate secretary of the Department of Research and Education.

Contributors

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